



**MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION of the Greenbelt City Council
held Saturday, February 16, 2002, for the purpose of reviewing the City Goals.**

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 9:05 a.m. It was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.

PRESENT WERE: Council members Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, Alan Turnbull, Thomas X. White, and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager; Jeff Williams, City Treasurer; James Craze, Chief of Police; Celia Craze, Director, Planning & Community Development; Ken Hall, Director, Public Works; Hank Irving, Director, Recreation; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk. David Moran, Assistant to the City Manager, arrived later.

Mayor Davis said Council wished to review and update the City's goals as needed, since it had been four years since they were last revised. The morning session of today's meeting would be used for briefings from the heads of departments; then Council would continue the discussion in the afternoon.

STAFF BRIEFINGS

Finance: Mr. Williams described a state of slow but steady revenue growth, as well as a diversification of businesses in the City, resulting in a welcome diversification of the personal property tax base. Mr. Putens commented that although revenues from the Aquatic & Fitness Center were down, he believed residents are happy with the result of the revised admissions policy. Mr. Turnbull asked if the City's personal property tax is a deterrent to location of businesses in Greenbelt. Mr. Williams and Mr. McLaughlin agreed that although businesses were sometimes surprised to discover they were in a municipality and that there was a tax at all, they did not believe the tax rate was a problem. Regarding computer technology issues, Mr. White asked that staff look into whether the City could buy and resell broadband, and there was discussion of a need for training on computers at the Youth Center and Green Ridge House.

Public Works: Mr. Hall reviewed the accomplishments of the department. He identified the completion of the new facility as a major current issue and talked about such long-term planning concerns as new methods of street resurfacing, improving the long-term building maintenance, further enhancing recycling, and use of alternate fuels. Mr. White commented on the problem of the costs of fast-fueling facilities and suggested further discussion of whether this should be a legislative issue (e.g., state provision of enabling grants).

Recreation: Mr. Irving identified a lack of volunteerism as a problem for City programs. He said the department was currently spending more time than usual on personnel issues, with the retirement and departure of key individuals. He gave highlights of

developments in some of the programs. Mr. White objected to the delay in setting up a meeting to discuss setting up a dark room in the Community Center. Mr. Roberts commented that only a few people, some of them non-residents, seemed to be interested in the dark room and questioned how much the City should invest in it. It was noted that Council wished to include arts programming in the revised goals. There was also discussion of the availability of Greenbelt Elementary School for community meetings and programs outside of school hours.

Planning and Community Development: Ms. Craze identified the department's primary issue as its "growing pains" and stated the need for additional administrative staff. She described the growth of functions and workload in the department over the period 1986-2001. She also presented the need for additional space, including an animal storage area. In response to a question from Mr. White about the impact of code enforcement fees, Ms. Craze said she thought on the commercial side the City was still only "scratching the surface of tolerance." The Mayor commented that she had received complaints regarding the stringency of code enforcement on rental property. Ms. Craze said she believed this was accountable to the replacement of an under-performing inspector. Mayor Davis suggested trying to improve public relations and public education in this area.

Police: Chief Craze spoke about the department's concern with a major (67%) increase in crime at the county level. He said the City's level is up too, but against property rather than people. He talked about the red light camera program; issues of recruitment, retention, and accreditation; and such future issues as Greenbelt Station and various "unfunded mandates" of the state. He also said it is time to begin thinking about adding on the third floor that the police station facility was designed to have. A number of issues were discussed, including the possibility raised before of the sharing by police and code enforcement of "public safety aides" who could provide enforcement in park and recreation areas.

The departmental briefings ended at about 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Gallagher
City Clerk

The meeting continued with Council's discussion of revising the City goals.

PRESENT WERE: Council members Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, Alan Turnbull, Thomas X. White, and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager. and David E. Moran, Assistant to the City Manager.

CARES: Before the discussion of the goals, Mr. McLaughlin reviewed the written report submitted by Carol Leventhal, Director of CARES, who was unable to attend the meeting. Council asked about the demographic make-up of the CARES staff. Mr. McLaughlin responded that the staff was all female.

GOALS DISCUSSION

Mr. White suggested that there was an opportunity to combine goals. He proposed combining "Enhance the Sense of Community," "Greenbelt West Integration," and "Changing Demographics" into one goal. In addition, he recommended a new goal entitled "Encourage and Facilitate Arts Education and Appreciation."

Mr. Turnbull suggested consolidating "Preserve & Protect the Green Belt" and "Improve Parks and Ball Fields."

Council discussed a goal dealing with the City's senior population. Mr. Turnbull noted the need to better address the City's effort to deal with the county education system.

Mr. Turnbull suggested that the arts goal needed to reflect a broader cultural component. Council discussed restating the goal as to "encourage and facilitate arts and cultural programs." Council agreed to consolidate "Greenbelt West Integration" and "Changing Demographics" under "Enhance Sense of Community."

After considerable discussion, Council identified the revised goals as follows:

1. Improve and Enhance Public Safety

2. Preserve and Enhance the Greenbelt

(Include Improve Parks & Ball Fields goal)

3. Enhance Sense of Community

(Include Greenbelt West and Changing Demographics goals)

4. Fiscal Sustainability

5. Invest in Greenbelt Youth

6. Enhance and Facilitate Cultural and Artistic Programs

7. Provide Quality-of-Life Programs for Greenbelt Seniors

Council reviewed the "Response/Solution" column for each goal and edited the various items. Under Goals 6 and 7, Council directed staff to work up "Response/Solution" and "Action Step" items and return a revised document to Council.

The meeting ended at 5:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
David E. Moran
Assistant to the City Manager